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# THE QUESTION OF CASTE.

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## LECTURE

BY

HON. CHARLES SUMNER.

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ALL men have the same rational nature, and the same powers of conscience, and all are equally made for indefinite improvement of these divine faculties, and for the happiness to be found in their virtuous use. Who that comprehends these gifts does not see that the diversities of the race vanish before them?—CHANNING.

THE Christian philosopher sees in every man a partaker of his own nature and a brother of his own species.—CHALMERS.

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# LECTURE.

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MR. PRESIDENT:—

In asking you to consider the Question of Caste, I open a great subject of immediate practical interest. Happily, Slavery no longer exists to disturb the peace of our Republic; but it is not yet dead in other lands, while among us the impious pretension of this great wrong still survives against the African because he is black, and against the Chinese because he is yellow. Here is nothing less than a claim of hereditary power from color, and it assumes that human beings, cast in the same mould with ourselves, and in all respects *men*, having the same title of manhood that we have, may be shut out from Equal Rights on account of the skin. Such is the pretension plainly stated.

On other occasions it has been my duty to show how inconsistent is this pretension with our character as a Republic, and with the promises of our Fathers,—all of which I consider never out of order to say and to urge. But my present purpose is rather to show how inconsistent it is with that sublime truth, being a part of God's law for the government of the world, which teaches the Unity of the Human Family, and its final harmony on earth. In this law, which is both commandment and promise, I find duties and hopes; perpetual duties never to be postponed, and perpetual hopes never to be abandoned, so long as man is man.

Believing in this law, and profoundly convinced that by the blessing of God it will all be fulfilled on earth, it is easy to see how unreasonable is a claim of power founded on any unchangeable physical incident derived from birth. Because man is black,—because man is yellow, he is none the less man. Because man is white, he is none the more man. By this great title he is universal heir to all that man can claim. Because he is man, and not on account of color, he enters into possession of the promised dominion over the animal kingdom,—“over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” But this equal copartnership without distinction of color symbolizes equal copartnership in all the Rights of Man.

## FAITH IN THE FUTURE.

As I enter upon this important theme, I confess an unwelcome impediment, partly from the prevailing prejudice of color, which has become with many what is sometimes called a second nature, and partly from the little faith among men in the future development of the race. The cry, "a white man's government," which is such an insult to human nature, has its influence in the work of degradation. Accustomed to this effrontery, people do not see its ineffable absurdity, which is made conspicuous if they simply consider the figure our fathers would have cut had they declared the equal rights of white men, and not the equal rights of all men. The great declaration was axiomatic and self-evident because universal: confined to a class it would have been neither. Harkening to this disgusting cry, people close the soul to all those quickening voices, whether of prophet, poet or philosopher, by which we are encouraged to persevere, nor do they heed the best lessons of science.

I begin by declaring my unalterable faith in the future, which nothing can diminish or impair. Other things I may renounce, but this I cannot. Throughout a life of controversy and opposition, frequently in a small minority, sometimes almost alone, I have never for a moment doubted the final fulfilment of those great promises for Humanity, without which this world would be a continuing chaos. To me it was clear from the beginning, even in the early darkness, and then in the bloody mists of war, that Slavery must yield to well-directed efforts against it, and now it is equally clear that every kindred pretension must yield likewise, until all are in the full fruition of those equal rights, which are the crown of life on earth. Nor can this great triumph be restricted to our Republic. Wherever men are gathered into nations, wherever civilization extends her beneficent sway, there will it be manifest. Against this lofty truth the assaults of the adversary are no better than the arrows of barbarians vainly shot at the sun. Still it moves, and it will move until all rejoice in its beams. The "fall-hail hereafter," in which the poet pictures personal success, is a feeble expression for that transcendent Future, where man shall be conqueror, not only over nations, but over himself, subduing pride of birth, prejudice of class, pretension of Caste.

## GOVERNMENT THE SCIENCE OF JUSTICE.

The assurances of the Future are strengthened when I look at government and see how its character is constantly improving as it comes within the sphere of knowledge. Men must know before they can act wisely, and this simple rule is applicable alike to individuals and communities. "Go, my son," said the Swedish Chancellor, "and see with what little wisdom

the world is governed." Down to his day government was little more than an expedient, a device, a trick for the aggrandizement of a class, of a few, or it may be of one. Calling itself Commonwealth, it was so in name only. There were classes always, and egotism was the prevailing law. Machiavel, the much-quoted herald of modern politics, insisted that all governments, whether monarchical or republican, owed their origin or reformation to a single law-giver, like Minos, Lycurgus or Solon. If this were true in his day, it is not in ours. In the presence of an enlightened people, a single law-giver, or an aristocracy of law-givers, is impossible, while government becomes the rule of all for the good of all,—not the One Man Power so constant in history,—not the triumvirate sometimes occurring,—not an oligarchy, which is the rule of a few,—not an aristocracy, which is the rule of a class,—not any combination, howsoever accepted, sanctioning exclusions.—but the whole body of the people, without exclusion of any kind, or, in the great words of Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg, "government of the people, by the people and for the people."

Thus far government has been at best an Art, like alchemy or astrology, where ministers exercised a subtle power, or speculators tried imaginative experiments, seeking some philosopher's stone at the expense of the people. Though in many respects still an Art only, it is fast becoming a Science founded on principles and laws from which there can be no just departure. As a science, it is determined by knowledge, like any other science, aided by that universal handmaid, the philosophy of induction. From a succession of particulars the general rule is deduced, and this is as true of government as of chemistry or astronomy. Nor do I see reason to doubt that, in the evolution of events, the time is at hand when government will be subordinated to unquestionable truth, making diversity of opinion as impossible in this great science as it is now impossible in other sciences already mastered by man. Science accomplishes a part only of its beneficent work when it brings physical nature within its domain. That other nature found in man must be brought within the same domain. And is it true that man can look into the unfathomable Universe, there to measure suns and stars, that he can penetrate the uncounted ages of the earth's existence, reading everywhere the inscriptions upon its rocks, but that he cannot look into himself, or penetrate his own nature, to measure human capacities and read the inscriptions upon the human soul? I do not believe it. What is already accomplished in such large measure for the world of matter, will yet be accomplished for that other world of Humanity, and then it will appear, by a law as precise as any in chemistry or astronomy, that just government stands only on the consent of the governed, that all men must be

equal before the law of man, as they are equal before the law of God, and that any discrimination founded on the accident of birth is inconsistent with that true science of government which is simply the science of justice on earth.

One of our teachers, who has shed much light on the science of government—I refer to Professor Lieber, of New York—shows that the state is what he calls “a *jurat* society,” precisely as the church is a religious society and an insurance company a financial society. The term is felicitous as it is suggestive. Above the state rises the image of Justice, lofty, blind-fold, with balance in hand. There it stands in colossal form with constant lesson of Equal Rights for All, while under its inspiration government proceeds, according to laws which cannot be disobeyed with impunity, and Providence is behind to sustain the righteous hand. In proportion as men are wise, they recognize these laws and confess the exalted science.

“Know thyself” is the Heaven-descended injunction which ancient piety carved in gold on the altar at Delphi. The famous oracle is mute, but the divine injunction survives; nor is it alone. St. Augustine impresses it in his own eloquent way when he says, “Men admire the altitude of mountains, the great waves of sea, the highest fall of rivers, the circuit of ocean, and the wheeling of stars, and *neglect themselves, nor do they admire.*” Following the early mandate, thus seconded by the most persuasive of the Christian Fathers, man will consider his place in the universe and his relations to his brother man. Looking into his soul, he will there find the great irreversible Law of Right, which is the universal law for the nation as for himself, commanding to do unto others as we would have them do unto us, and under the safeguard of this universal law I now place the rights of all mankind. It is little that I can do, but, taking counsel of my desires, I am not without hope of contributing something to that just judgment which shall blast the effrontery of Caste as doubly offensive, not only to the idea of a Republic, but to human nature itself.

#### CASTE.

Already you are prepared to condemn Caste, when you understand its real character. To this end, let me carry you to that ancient India, with its population of more than a hundred and eighty millions, where this artificial discrimination, born of impossible fable, was for ages the dominating institution of society, being in fact, what Slavery was in our Rebellion, the corner-stone of the whole structure.

The Portuguese were the first of European nations to form establishments in India, and, therefore, through them was the civilized world first acquainted with its peculiar institutions. But



I know no monument of their presence there, and no contribution from them to our knowledge of the country, so enduring as the word *Caste*, or in the Portuguese language, *casta*, by which they designated those rigid orders or ranks into which the people of India were divided. The term originally applied by them has been adopted in the other languages of Europe, where it signifies primarily the orders or ranks of India, but, by natural extension, any separate and fixed order of society in other countries. In the latter sense *Caste* is now constantly employed. With this historic explanation it is apparent that the word is too modern for our classical English literature, or for that most authentic record of our language, the Dictionary of Dr. Johnson, which first saw the light in 1755.

Though the word was unknown in earlier times, the hereditary discrimination it describes, entered into the political system of modern Europe, where people were distributed into classes, and the son succeeded to the condition of his father, whether of privilege or disability,—the son of a noble being a noble with great privileges,—the son of a mechanic being a mechanic, with great disabilities: and this inherited condition was applicable even to the special labor of the father; nor was there any business beyond its tyrannical control. According to Macaulay, “the tinkers formed an hereditary caste.” The father of John Bunyan was a tinker, and the son inherited the position. The French Revolution did much to shake this irrational system, but in many parts of Europe, down to this day, the son emancipates himself with difficulty from the class in which he is born. But just in proportion to the triumph of Equality does *Caste* disappear.

This institution is essentially barbarous, and, therefore, appears in barbarous ages, or in countries not yet relieved from the early incubus. It flourished side by side with the sculptured bulls and cuneiform characters of Assyria, side by side with pyramids and hieroglyphics of Egypt. It showed itself under the ambitious sway of Persia, and even in the much-praised Cæropian era of Attica. In all these countries *Caste* was organized, differing somewhat in divisions, but hereditary in character. And the same phenomenon arrested the attention of the conquering Spaniards in Peru. The system had two distinct elements: first, separation, with rank and privilege, or, their opposite, with degradation and disability: secondly, descent from father to son: so that it was perpetual separation from generation to generation.

#### CASTE IN INDIA.

In Hindoostan this dreadful system, which, under the name of order, is the organization of disorder, has prolonged itself to

our day, so as to be a living admonition to mankind. That we may shun the evil it entails, in whatever shape it comes, I shall now endeavor to expose its true character.

The regular Castes of India are four in number, called in Sanscrit *varras* or *colors*, although it does not appear that by nature they were of different colors. Their origin will be found in the sacred law-book of the Hindoos, the ordinances of Menu, where it is recorded that the Creator caused the Brahmin, the Cshatriya, the Vaisya and the Sudra, so named from *scripture*, *protection*, *wealth* and *labor*, to proceed from his mouth, his arm, his thigh and his foot, appointing separate duties for each class. To the Brahmin, proceeding from the mouth, was allotted the duty of reading the Veda and of teaching it,—to the Cshatriya, proceeding from the arm, the duty of soldier,—to the Vaisya, proceeding from the thigh, the duty of cultivating the land and keeping herds of cattle, and to the Sudra, proceeding from the foot, was appointed the chief duty of serving the other classes without depreciating their worth. Such was the original assignment of parts; but, under the operation of natural laws, those already elevated increased their importance, while those already degraded sank lower. Ascent from an inferior class was absolutely impossible. As well might a vegetable become a man. The distinction was perpetuated by the injunction that each should marry only in his own class, with sanguinary penalties inflicted upon any attempted amalgamation.

The Brahmin was child of rank and privilege; the Sudra, child of degradation and disability. Omitting the two intermediate classes, soldiers and husbandmen, look for one moment at the two extremes, as described by the sacred volume.

The Brahmin is constantly hailed as first born, and, by right, chief of the whole creation. This eminence is declared in various terms. Thus it is said, "When a Brahmin springs to light, he is born above the world," and then again it is said, "Whatever exists in the universe is all in effect the wealth of the Brahmin." As he engrosses the favor of the Deity, so is he entitled to the veneration of mortals, and it is announced that, "whether learned or ignorant, he is a powerful divinity, even as fire is a powerful divinity, whether consecrated or common." Immunities of all kinds cluster about him. Not for the most insufferable crime can he be touched in person or property; nor can he be called to pay taxes, while all other classes must bestow their wealth upon him. Such is the Brahmin, with these privileges crystallized in his blood from generation to generation.

On the other hand, is the Sudra, who is the contrast in all particulars. As much as the Brahmin is an object of constant veneration, so is the Sudra an object of constant contempt. As

one is exalted above Humanity, so is the other degraded below it. The life of the Sudra is servile, but according to the sacred volume, he was created by the Self-existent especially to serve the Brahmin. Everywhere his degradation is manifest. He can hold no property which a Brahmin cannot seize. The crime he commits is visited with the most condign punishment, beyond that allotted to the other classes subject to punishment. The least disrespect to a Brahmin is punished terribly. For presuming to sit on a Brahmin's carpet, the punishment is banishment: for contumelious words to a Brahmin it is an iron style, ten fingers long, thrust red-hot into the mouth, and for offering instruction to a Brahmin, it is nothing less than hot oil poured into mouth and ears. Such is the Sudra, and this fearful degradation, with all its disabilities, is crystallized in his blood from generation to generation.

Below these is another more degraded even than the Sudra, being the outcast, with no place in either of the four regular Castes, and known commonly as the Pariah. Here is another term imported into familiar usage to signify generally those on whom society has set its ban. No person of the regular Castes holds communication with the Pariah. His presence is contaminating. Milk, and even water, is defiled by his passing shadow and cannot be used until purified. The Brahmin sometimes puts him to death at sight. In the well-known language of our country, once applied to another people, he has no rights which a Brahmin is bound to respect.

#### WRONG OF CASTE.

Such a system, so shocking to the natural sense, has been denounced by all who have considered it, whether on the spot, or at a distance, unless I except the excellent historian Robertson, who seems to find apologies for it, as men among us find apologies for the Caste which sends its lengthening shadow across our Republic. I might take your time until late in the evening unfolding its obvious evil, as exposed by those who have witnessed its operation. This testimony is collected in a work entitled *Caste opposed to Christianity*, by Rev. Joseph Roberts, and published in London in 1847. I give brief specimens only. A Hindoo converted to Christianity exposes its demoralizing influence, when he says, "Caste is the stronghold of pride which makes a man think of himself more highly than he ought to think:" and so also another converted Hindoo, when he says, "Caste makes a man think that he is holier than another and that he has some inherent virtue which another has not:" and still another converted Hindoo, when he says, "Caste is part and parcel of idolatry and all heathen abomination." But no testimony surpasses

that of the eminent Reginald Heber, the Bishop of Calcutta, when he declared that, "it is a system which tends, more than any else the devil has yet invented, to destroy the feelings of general benevolence and to make nine-tenths of mankind the hopeless slaves of the remainder." Under these protests, and the growing influence of Christianity, the system is so far mitigated, that according to an able writer whose soul is enlisted against it, "the distinctions are felt on certain limited occasions only." These are the words of James Mill, interesting always as the author of the best work on India, and the father of John Stuart Mill. It is now admitted that under constraint of necessity the member of a superior Caste may descend to the pursuits of an inferior Caste. The lofty Brahmin engages in traffic, but he cannot touch "leather," for contact with this article of commerce is polluting. But I am obliged to add that no modification leaving "distinctions" transmissible with the blood can be adequate. So long as these continue, the natural harmonies of society are disturbed and man is degraded. The system in its mildest form can have nothing but evil, for it is a constant violation of primal truth, and a constant obstruction to that progress which is the appointed destiny of man.

#### CASTE IN THE UNITED STATES.

Change now the scene,—from ancient India, and the shadow of unknown centuries, to our Republic, born of yesterday. Here the Caste claiming hereditary rank and privilege is white: the Caste doomed to hereditary degradation and disability is black or yellow, and it is gravely asserted that this difference of color marks difference of race, which in itself justifies the discrimination. To save this enormity of claim from indignant reprobation, it is insisted that the varieties of men do not proceed from a common stock,—that they are different in origin,—that this difference is perpetuated in their respective capacities, and the apology concludes with the practical assumption, that the white man is a superior Caste not unlike the Brahmin, while the black man is an inferior Caste not unlike the Sudra, sometimes even the Pariah; nor is the yellow man exempted from this same insulting proscription. When I consider how for a long time the African was shut out from testifying in court, even when seeking redress for the grossest outrage, and how at this time in some places the Chinese is also shut out from testifying in court, each seems to have been little better than the Pariah. In stating this assumption of superiority, which I do not exaggerate, I open a question of surpassing interest, whether in science, government or religion.

Here I must not forget that some, who admit the common origin of all men, insist that the African is descended from

Ham, son of Noah, through Canaan, cursed by Noah to be servant of his brethren; and that, therefore, he may be degraded even to slavery. But this apology is not original with us. Nobles in Poland seized upon it to justify their lordly pretensions, calling their serfs, though white, descendants of Ham. But whether employed by Pole or American, it is worthy only of derision. I do not know that this apology is invoked for maltreating the Chinese, although he is descended from Ham as much as the Pole.

#### UNITY OF THE HUMAN FAMILY.

Two passages of Scripture, one in the Old Testament and the other in the New, both governing this question, attest the Unity of the Human Family. The first is in that sublime chapter of Genesis, where, amidst the wonders of Creation, it is said: "So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them. And God blessed them; and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it." The other passage is from that great sermon of St. Paul, when, standing in the midst of Mars Hill, he proclaimed to the men of Athens, and through them to all mankind, that God "hath made of *one blood* all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." (Acts, xvii. 26.) If, as is sometimes argued, there be ambiguity in the account of the Creation, or if in any way its authority has been impaired by scientific criticism, there is nothing of the kind to detract from the sermon of St. Paul, which must continue always venerable and beautiful.

#### TESTIMONY OF SCIENCE.

Appealing from these texts, the apologists hurry to science, and there I follow. But I must compress into paragraphs what might fill volumes.

Ethnology, to which we repair, is a science of recent origin, exhibiting the different races or varieties of man in their relations with each other, as that other science, anthropology, exhibits man in his relation to the animal world. Nature and history are our authorities, but all science and all knowledge are tributary. Perhaps no other theme is grander; for it is the very beginning of human history, in which all nations and men have a common interest. Its vastness is increased when we consider that it embraces properly not only the origin, distribution and capacity of man, but his destiny on earth,—stretching into the infinite past,—stretching also into the infinite future, and thus spanning Humanity.

The subject is entirely modern. Hippocrates, one of our ancient masters, has left a treatise on "air, water and place,"

where climatic influences are recognized, but nobody in antiquity studied the varieties of our race, or regarded its origin except mythically. The discovery of America, and the later circumnavigation of the globe, followed by the development of the sciences generally, prepared the way for this new science.

#### QUESTION OF VARIETIES IN THE HUMAN FAMILY.

It is obvious to the most superficial observer that there are divisions or varieties in the Human Family, commonly called races, but the most careful explorations of science leave the number uncertain. These differences are in color and in skull,—also in language. Of these the most obvious is color; but here, again, the varieties multiply in proportion as we consider transitional or intermediate hues. Two great teachers in the last century, Linnæus,—of whom it was said “God made, Linnæus classified,” *Deus jecit, Linnæus disposuit*,—and Kant, a sincere and penetrating seeker of truth, were content with four,—white, copper, olive, and black; corresponding geographically to European, American, Asiatic, and African. Buffon, in his eloquent portraiture, recognizes five, with geographical designations. He was followed by Blumenbach, who also recognizes five, with the names which have become so famous since: Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malay. Here first appears the popular but deceptive term Caucasian, for nobody supposes now that the white cradle was on Caucasus, which is best known to English-speaking people by the verse of Shakspeare making it anything but Eden:—

O, who can hold a fire in his hand,  
By thinking of the frosty Caucasus?

Blumenbach was an able and honest inquirer, and if his nomenclature is defective it is only another illustration of the adage that nothing is at the same time invented and perfected.

If I mention other attempts, it is only to show how science hesitates before this great problem. Cuvier reduces the Family to three, with branches or sub-divisions, and lends his great authority to the term Caucasian, which he adopts from Blumenbach. The German Lesson began with three, according to color, white, yellow and black, but afterwards recognized six—white, bistre, orange, yellow, red, black—represented respectively by European, Hindoo, Malay, Mongolian, American and Negro, African and Asiatic. Desmoulins makes twelve. Bory de St. Vincent adds to Desmoulins. Broc adds to St. Vincent. The London Ethnological Journal makes no less than sixty-three, of which twenty-eight varieties are intellectual, and thirty-five physical; and then we are told that thirty varieties of Caucasian alone are recognized on the monuments of ancient

Egypt, as they appear in the magnificent works of Rossellini and Lepsius. Our own countryman, Pickering, whose experience was gained on the exploring expedition of Capt. Wilkes, in his work on the "Races of Men and their Geographical Distribution," enumerates eleven varieties of man, according to color, divided into four groups—white, brown, blackish-brown, and black. In his opinion, there is no middle ground between the admission of eleven distinct species in the Human Family, and the reduction to one.

The German anatomist, Camper, distinguishes the human family by the facial angle, ranging from one hundred degrees, as in the head of Apollo, perpetuated by Greek art, down to forty-two degrees in the skull of an ape. This attempt was continued by Virey, who divides man into two species, the first with a facial angle of  $85^{\circ}$  to  $90^{\circ}$ , including Caucasian, Mongolian and copper-colored American, and the second with a facial angle of  $75^{\circ}$  to  $82^{\circ}$ , including dark-brown Malay, blackest Hottentot and Papuan, and the Negro. Prichard, whose voluminous works constitute an ethnological mine, finds, chiefly from the skull, seven varieties, which he calls (1) Iranian, from Iran, the primeval seat in Persia of the Arian race, embracing the Caucasian of Blumenbach with some Asiatic and African nations; (2) Turanian or Mongolian; (3) American, including Esquimaux; (4) Hottentot and Bushman; (5) Negro; (6) Papuan, or woolly-haired Polynesian; (7) Australian. The same industrious observer finds three principal varieties in the conformation of the head, corresponding respectively to savage, nomadic and civilized man. In the savage African and Australian the jaw is prolonged forward, constituting what he calls by an expressive term, prognathous. In the nomadic Mongolian the skull is pyramidal and the face broad. In civilized man the skull is oval and elliptical. But the naturalist records that there are forms of transition as nations approach to civilization or relapse to barbarism.

Thus does the human skull refuse any definitive answer. There are varieties of skull, as of color; but the question remains to what extent they attest original diversity. Equally vain is the attempt to obtain a guide in the form of the human pelvis. But every such attempt and its failure has its lesson.

There remains one other criterion—I mean language; and here the testimony is such as to disturb all divisions founded on color or skull; for it is ascertained that people differing in these respects speak languages having a common origin. The ancient Sanskrit, sometimes called the most elaborate of human dialects, has yielded its secret to philological research, and now stands forth the mother tongue of the European nations. It is difficult to measure the importance of this revelation; for while

not decisive on the main question, it increases our difficulty in accepting any postulate of original diversity.

#### UNITY OF ORIGIN.

And now the question arises, how are these varieties to be regarded in the light of science? Are they aboriginal and from the beginning? Or are they superinduced by secondary causes of which the record is lost in the extended night preceding our historic day? Here the authorities are divided. On the one side, we are reminded that within the period of recognized chronology no perceptible change has occurred in any of these varieties,—that on the earliest monuments of Egypt the African is pictured precisely as we see him now, even to that servitude from which among us he is happily released,—and it is insisted that no known influences of climate or place are sufficient to explain such transformations from an aboriginal type, while plural types are in conformity with the analogies of the animal and vegetable world. On the other side, we are reminded that, whatever may be the difficulties from supposing a common centre of creation, there are greater still in supposing plural centres,—that it is easier to understand one creation than many,—that geographical science makes us acquainted with intermediate gradations of color and conformation in which the great contrasts disappear,—that, even within the last half century and in Europe, people have tended to lose their national physiognomy and run into a common type, thus attesting subjection to transforming influences,—that, after accepting the races already described there are other varieties, national, family and individual, not less difficult of explanation, and it is insisted that whatever these varieties, be they few or many, there is among them all an *overruling Unity*, by which they are constituted one and the same cosmopolitan species, endowed with speech, reason, conscience and the hope of immortality, knitting all together in a common Humanity, and amidst all seeming differences making all as near to each other as they are distant from every other created thing, while to every one is given that great first instrument of civilization, the human hand, by which the earth is tilled, cities built, history written and the stars measured;—and this unquestionable Unity is pronounced all-sufficient evidence of a common origin.

In considering this great question, do all inquirers sufficiently recognize the element of time? Obviously the sphere of operation is enlarged in proportion to the time employed. Everything is possible with time. Confining ourselves to recognized chronology, existing varieties cannot be reconciled with that unity found in a common origin. What are the 6,000



years of Hebrew time,—what are the 22,000 years of human annals sanctioned by the learning and piety of Bunsen, for the consummation of these transformations? And this longest period, how brief for the completion of those two marvellous languages, Sanskrit and Greek, which at the earliest dawn of authentic history were already so perfect! Considering the infinitudes of astronomy and those other infinitudes of geology, it is not unreasonable to claim an antiquity for primeval man compared with which all the years of authentic history are a span. With such incalculable opportunity, amidst unknown changes of nature, where heat and cold strove for mastery, no transformation consistent with the preservation of the characteristic species, was impossible. Egypt is not alone in its Sphinx, perplexing mortals with perpetual enigma. Science is our Sphinx and its enigma is Man and his varieties on earth. To which I answer, “Time.”

Nor is it unreasonable to suppose that at the creation conditions were stamped upon man, making transformations natural. Because unnatural according to observation during the brief period of historic time, it does not follow that they are not strictly according to law. The famous calculating machine of Charles Babbage, the eminent mathematician, as described in his remarkable *Bridgewater Treatise*, where science vindicates anew the ways of Providence to man, supplies an illustration, which is not without instruction. This machine, with a power almost miraculous, was so adjusted as to produce a series of natural numbers in regular order from unity to a number expressed by one hundred millions and one—100,000,001,—when another series was commenced, regulated by a different law, which continued until at a certain number the series was again changed, and all these changes in the immense progression proceeded from a propulsion at the beginning. Any simple observer, finding that the series stretched onwards through successive millions, would have no hesitation in concluding from the vast induction, that it must proceed always according to the same law; and yet it was not so. But the calculating machine is only a contrivance of human skill. And cannot the Creator do as much? That is a very inadequate conception of the Almighty Power creating the universe and placing man in it, which supposes, according to the language of Sir John Herschel, the eminent astronomer, that “His combinations are exhausted in any of the theatres of their former exercise.” Thus far we know not the law of the series which governed primeval man. Who can say that after lapse of time, changes did not occur, always in obedience to conditions stamped upon him at the creation?

A simpler illustration carries us to the same result. A cog-wheel, so common in machinery, operates ordinarily by the cogs

on its rim; but the wheel may be so constructed that after a certain series of rotations another set of cogs is presented inducing a different motion. All can see how, in conformity with pre-existing law, a change may occur in the operations of the machine. But it was not less easy for the Creator to fix his law at the beginning, according to which the evolutions of this world proceed. And thus are we brought back to the conclusion so often announced, that unity of origin must not be set aside simply because existing varieties of man cannot be sufficiently explained by known laws, operating during that brief period which we call history.

In considering this great question there are authorities which cannot be disregarded. Count them or weigh them, it is the same. I adduce a few only, beginning with Latham, the ethnologist, who insists,—

“(1.) That, as matter of fact, the languages of the earth’s surface are referable to one common origin; (2.) that, as matter of logic, this common origin of language is *prima facie* evidence of a common origin for those who speak it.” [Encyclopædia Britannica, article *Ethnology*.

The great French geographer and circumnavigator, Dumont d’Urville, testifies thus:—

“I do not see upon the surface of the globe but three races truly distinct,—the white, more or less carnation,—the yellow, more or less bronzed or coppered, and the black. I share the opinion which refers these three races to one same primitive stock, and which places its cradle on the central table land of Asia.” [Histoire du Voyage, Tome II., p. 614 and 627.

Buffon, the brilliant naturalist, whose work is one of the French classics, thus records his judgment:—

“All concurs to prove that the human race is not composed of species entirely different among themselves, that on the contrary, there was originally but one species of men, who, in multiplying and spreading over all the surface of the globe, experienced different changes by the influence of climate, by the difference of food, by the manner of living, by hereditary maladies and by the intermixture of individuals varied to infinity.” [Histoire Naturelle, Tome III., p. 530.

#### UNQUESTIONABLE UNITY OF HUMAN FAMILY.

Another authority, avoiding the question of origin, has given a summary full of instruction and beauty. I refer to Alexander von Humboldt, who had studied Man in both hemispheres,

and to whom every science was companion. Adopting the words of the great German anatomist, Johannes Müller, that "the different races of mankind are forms of one sole species by the union of two of which descendants are propagated," and criticising the popular classification of Blumenbach and Prichard as wanting "typical sharpness" or "well-established principle," the author of *Cosmos* insists, "that the distribution of mankind is only a distribution into *varieties*, which are commonly designated by the somewhat indefinite term *races*," and then announces the grand conclusion:—

"While we maintain the Unity of the human species, we at the same time repel the depressing assumption of superior and inferior races of man. There are nations more susceptible of cultivation, more highly civilized, more ennobled by mental cultivation, than others, *but none in themselves nobler than others.*" [*Cosmos*, Vol. I., p. 358.

Such is the testimony of Science by one of its greatest masters. Rarely have better words been uttered. Nor should it be said longer that science is silent. Humboldt has spoken. And what he said is much in little—most simple, but most comprehensive—for, while asserting the Unity of the Human Family, he repels that disheartening pretension of Caste, which I insist shall find no place in our political system. Through him science is enlisted for the Equal Rights of All.

Whatever the judgment on the unity of origin, where, from the nature of the case, there can be no final human testimony, it is a source of infinite consolation, that we can anchor to that other Unity, found in a common organization, a common nature, and a common destiny, being at once physical, moral and prophetic. This is the true Unity of the Human Family. In all essentials constituting Humanity, in all that makes Man, all varieties of the human species are one and the same. There is no real difference between them. The variance, whether of complexion, configuration or language, is external and superficial only, like the dress we wear. Here all knowledge and every science concur. Anatomy, physiology, psychology, history, the equal promises to all men, testify. Look at Man on the dissecting table, and he is always the same, no matter in what color he is clad—same limbs, same bones, same proportions, same structure, same upright stature. Look at Man in the world, and you will find him in nature always the same—modified only by the civilization about him. There is no human being, black or yellow, who may not apply to himself the language of Shakspeare's Jew: "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions?—fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to

the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die?" Look at Man, in his destiny here or hereafter, so far as it can be penetrated by mortal vision, and who will venture to claim for any variety or class exclusive prerogatives on earth or in heaven? Where is this preposterous pretender? God has given to all the same longevity, marking a common mortality, the same cosmopolitan character, marking citizenship everywhere, and the same capacity for improvement, marking that tendency sometimes called the perfectibility of the race, and he has given to all alike the same promise of immortal life. By these tokens is man known everywhere to be man, and by these tokens is he everywhere entitled to the Rights of Man.

#### THE DOG.

There is a lesson in the dog, is there not? Who does not admire that fidelity which makes this animal the ally and friend of man, following him over the whole earth, in every climate, under all influences of sky, cosmopolitan as himself, —in prosperity and adversity always true, and then by beautiful fable, transported to another world, where the association of life is prolonged to man while "his faithful dog shall bear him company?" The dog of Ulysses dying for joy at his master's return when all Ithaca had forgotten the long-absent lord, is not the only instance. But who has heard that this wonderful instinct makes any discrimination of manhood? It is to man that the dog is faithful; nor does it matter of what condition, whether the child of wealth or the rough shepherd tending his flocks; nor does it matter of what complexion, whether Caucasian white, or Ethiopian black or Mongolian yellow. It is enough that the master is Man; and thus, even through the instincts of a brute, does Nature testify to that Unity of the Human Family, by virtue of which all are alike in rights.

#### A COMMON HUMANITY FORBIDS CASTE.

Experts in Ethnology are earnest to recognize this other Unity on which I now insist. Our own Agassiz, who is the most illustrious of the masters not accepting the unity of origin, is careful to add that "the moral question of Brotherhood among men" is not affected by this dissent, and he announces that "Unity is not only compatible with diversity of origin, but that it is the universal law of Nature." (*Types of Mankind*, lxxv.) This other Unity found an eloquent representative in William von Humboldt, not less eminent as philologist than his brother as naturalist, who proclaims our Com-

mon Humanity to be the dominant idea of history, more and more extending its empire, "striving to remove barriers which prejudice and limited views of every period have erected among men, and to treat all mankind, without reference to religion, nation or color, as one Fraternity, one great community;" and he concludes by announcing "the recognition of the bond of Humanity as one of the noblest leading principles in the history of mankind." And these grand words are adopted by Alexander von Humboldt, so that the philologist and the naturalist unite in this cause. (*Cosmos*, Vol. I. p. 359.) Thus in every direction do we find new testimony against the pretension of Caste. We are told that "a little learning is a dangerous thing." If this be ever true, it cannot be better illustrated than by that sciolism, which from the varieties of the human species would overthrow that sublime Unity which is the first law of creation. As well overthrow creation itself. There is no great intelligence which does not witness to this law. Bacon, Newton, Leibnitz, Descartes all testify. Laplace, from the heights of his knowledge, teaches that the curve described by a simple particle of air or vapor is regulated by a law as certain as the orbits of the planets; and is not man the equal subject of certain law? God rejoices in Unity. It is with Him a universal law, applicable to all above and below, from the sun in the heavens to the soul of man. Not one law for one group of stars, and one law for one group of men; but one law for all stars, and one law for all men. It was the saying of Plato, that "God geometrizes," which is only another expression for the certainty and universality of this law. Aristotle follows Plato, when, borrowing an illustration from the well-known requirements of the Greek drama, he announces, that "in this unity nothing is unconnected or out of place as in a bad tragedy." But Caste is unconnected and out of place. It is a perpetual discord; a prolonged jar; contrary to the first principle of the universe.

Only when we consider the universality of the moral law can we fully appreciate the grandeur of this unity. The great philosopher of Germany, Kant, declared that there were two things filling him always with admiration—the starry heavens above and the moral law within. Well might the two be joined together, for in that moral law, with a home in every bosom, is a vastness and beauty commensurate with the universe. Every human being carries a universe in himself; but here, as in that other universe, is the same prevailing law of Unity, in harmony with which the starry heavens move in their spheres, and men are constrained to the duties of life. The stars must obey; so must men. This obedience brings the whole Human Family into harmony with each other, and also with the Creator. And here, again, we behold the gran-

deur of the system, while new harmonies unfold. Religion takes up the lesson, and the daily prayer, "Our Father who art in Heaven," is the daily witness to the Brotherhood of Man. God is universal Father: then are we all brothers. If not children of Adam, we are all children of God,—if not all from the same father on earth, we are all from the same Father in Heaven, and this affecting relationship, which knows no distinction of race or color, is more vital and ennobling than any monopoly. Here, once more, is that universal law which forbids Caste, speaking not only with the voice of science but of religion also, praying, pleading, protesting, in the name of a common Father, against such wrong and insult to our brother man. In beautiful harmony are those great words of prophecy: "I will make a *Man* more precious than fine gold—even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." Against this lofty recognition of a common humanity, how mean the pretension of Caste.

#### COMMON DESTINY.

Assuming this common humanity, it is difficult to see how reason can resist the conclusion, that in the lapse of time, there must be a common universal civilization which every nation and every people will share. None too low, none too inaccessible for its kindred embrace. Amidst the differences which now exist, and in the contemplation of nations and peoples infinitely various in condition, with the barbarian still claiming an extensive empire, with the savage still claiming a whole continent and islands of the sea, I cannot doubt the certain triumph of this great law. Believing in God, I believe also in man. Was he not told at the beginning, with the blessing of God upon him, "*Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it*"? All of which I am sure will be done. Why this common humanity—why this common brotherhood, if the inheritance is for Brahmins only? Why the injunction to multiply and subdue the earth, if there are to be Sudras and Pariahs always? Why this sublime law of Unity embracing the universe, if man is left beyond its reach?

I have already founded the Unity of the Human Family partly on the common destiny, and I now insist that this common destiny is attested by the unquestionable Unity of the Human Family. They are parts of one system, complements of each other. Why this unity, if there be no common destiny? How this common destiny, if there be no unity? Assuming the unity, then is the common destiny a necessary consequence, under the law appointed for man.

The skeptic is disturbed, because thus far in our brief chronology this common civilization has not been developed; but to my mind it is plain, that much has been done, making the rest

certain through the same incessant influences under the great law of Human Progress.

That European civilization, which has already pushed its conquests in every quarter of the globe, is a lesson to mankind. Beginning with small communities, it has proceeded stage by stage, extending to larger, until it embraced nations and distant places,—and now stamps itself ineffaceably upon increasing multitudes making them, under God, pioneers in the grand march of Humanity.

#### ORIGINAL DEGRADATION OF ENGLAND.

Europe had her dark ages, when there was a night with "darkness visible," and there was an earlier period in the history of each nation when man was not less savage than now in the very heart of Africa; but the European has emerged and at last stands in a world of light. Take any of the nations whose development belongs to modern times, and the original degradation can be exhibited in authentic colors. There is England, whose present civilization is in many respects so finished; but when the conquering Cæsar, only fifty-five years before the birth of Christ, landed on this unknown island, her people were painted savages, with a cruel religion and a conjugal system which was an incestuous concubinage. His authentic report places this condition beyond question, and thus knowing her original degradation and her present transformation after eighteen centuries, we have the terms for a question in the Rule of Three. Given original degradation and present transformation of England, how long will it take for the degradation of other lands to experience a similar transformation? Add also present agencies of civilization to which England was for centuries a stranger.

This instance is so important as to justify details. When Britain was first revealed to the commercial enterprise of Tyre, her people, according to Macaulay, were "little superior to the natives of the Sandwich Islands." The historian must mean when those islands were first discovered by Capt. Cook. Prichard, our best authority, supposes them "nearly on a level with the New Zealanders or Tahitians, or perhaps not very superior to the Australians," which is very low indeed. There was but little change, if any, when they became known to the Romans. They are pictured as large and tall, excelling the Gauls in stature and strength, with heavy features and clumsy figures, and, according to the geographer Strabo, "they did not stand firm on their legs." Northward were the Picts and Scots, also Britons, tattooing their bodies, dwelling in tents, savage in manners, and with a moral degradation kindred to that of the Southern Britons. Across the Channel were the Irish, whose

reported condition was even more terrible. According to Cæsar, most in the interior of Britain never sowed corn, but lived on milk and flesh, and were clad in untanned skins; but he notes that all colored their bodies with a cerulean pigment, "making them more horrid to the sight in battle," and he then relates that societies of ten or twelve, brothers and brothers, parents and children, had wives in common. Their religious observances were such as became this savage life. Here was the sanctuary of the Druids, whose absolute and peculiar power was sustained by inhuman rites. On rude but terrible altars, in the gloom of the forest, human victims were sacrificed, while from the blood, as it coursed under the knife of the priest, there was a divination of future events. There was no industry or production except slaves too illiterate for the Roman market. Imagination pictured strange things. One province was reported where the ground was covered with serpents and the air was such that no man could inhale it and live. In the polite circles of the empire, the whole region excited a fearful horror, which has been aptly likened to that of the early Ionians for the Straits of Scylla or the city of the Læstrygonian cannibals. The historian records with a sigh that no magnificent remains of Latian porches and aqueducts are to be found here—that no writer of British birth is reckoned among the masters of Latian poetry and eloquence.

And this was England at the beginning. Long afterwards, when centuries had intervened, the savage was improved into the barbarian. But from one authentic instance learn the rest. The trade in slaves was active, and English pedlers bought up children throughout the country, while the people, greedy of the price, sold their own relations, sometimes their own offspring. In similar barbarism, all Jews and their gains were the absolute property of the king; and this law, beginning with Edward the Confessor, was enforced under successive monarchs, one of them making a mortgage of all Jews to his brother as security for a debt. Nothing worse is now said of Africa.

Progress was slow. When in 1430 the Italian Æneas Sylvius, afterwards Pope Pius II., visited this island, it was to his eyes most forlorn. Houses in cities were of stones without mortar. Cottages had no other door than a stiffened bull-hide. Food was coarse. Bread was such a rarity among the people as to be a curiosity. Women "giggled" at the sight of it. When afterwards, under Henry VIII., civilization had begun, the condition of the people was deplorable. There was no such thing among them as comfort, while plague and death-sweats prevailed. The learned and ingenious Erasmus, who was an honored guest in England at this time, refers much to the filthiness of the houses. The floors he describes as commonly of



clay, strewn with rushes, sometimes remaining unmolested for twenty years, festering with spittle, vomit, uncleanness of dogs and men, and other ordure not to be named. I quote the words of this eminent observer. The traveller from the interior of Africa would hardly make a worse report.

Such was England. But this story of savagery and barbarism is not peculiar to this country. I might take other countries one by one and exhibit the original degradation and present elevation. I might take France. I content myself with one instance only. An authentic incident of French history recorded by a contemporary witness, and associated with famous names in the last century, shows the little recognition at that time of a common humanity. And this story concerns a lady, remarkable among her sex for various talent and especially as a mathematician, and the French translator of Newton, Madame du Chatelet. This great lady, the friend of Voltaire, found no difficulty in undressing before the men servants of her household, not considering it well-proved that such persons were of the human family. This curious revelation of manners, which arrested the attention of de Tocqueville in his remarkable studies on the origin of the French Revolution, (*Ancien Régime*, p. 196,) if reported from Africa, would be recognized as marking a most perverse barbarism.

#### THE LAW OF PROGRESS.

These are illustrations only, which might be multiplied and extended indefinitely, but they are sufficient. Here, within a limited sphere, obvious to all, is the operation of that law which governs universal man. Progress here prefigures progress everywhere; nay, progress here is the first stage in the world's progress. Nobody doubts the progress of England; nobody doubts the progress of France; nobody doubts the progress of the European Family wherever distributed, in all quarters of the globe. But must not the same law under which these have been elevated exert its equal influence on the whole Family of Man? Is it not with people as with individuals? Some arrive early, others tardily. Who has not observed that, independent of original endowment, the progress of the individual depends upon the influences about him? Surrounded by opportunity and trained with care, he grows into the type of civilized man; but, on the contrary, shut out from opportunity and neglected by the world, he remains stationary, always a man, entitled from his manhood to Equal Rights, but an example of inferiority, if not of degradation. Unquestionably it is the same with a people. Here, again, opportunity and a training hand are needed.

To the inquiry, how is this destiny to be accomplished, I answer, simply by recognizing the law of Unity and acting accordingly. The law is plain; obey it. Let each people obey the law at home; its extension abroad will follow. The standard at home will become the standard everywhere. The harmony at home will become the harmony of mankind. Drive Caste from this Republic and it will be like Cain, a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth.

#### AFRICA AND THE AFRICAN.

Therefore do I now plead for our Common Humanity in all lands. Especially do I plead for the African, not only among us, but in his own vast, mysterious home, where for unknown centuries he has been the prey of the spoiler. He may be barbarous, perhaps savage; but so have others been who are now in the full enjoyment of civilization. If you are above him in any respect, then by your superiority are you bound to be his helper. From him to whom much is given is much required; and this is the law for a nation, as for an individual.

The unhappy condition of Africa, a stranger to civilization, is often invoked against a common Humanity. Here again is that sciolism, which is the inseparable ally of every ignoble pretension. It is easy to explain this condition without yielding to a theory inconsistent with God's Providence. The key is found in her geographical character, affording few facilities for intercommunication abroad or at home. Ocean and river are the natural allies of civilization, as England will attest, for such was their early influence that Cæsar on landing remarked the superior condition of the people on the coast. Europe, indented by seas on the south and north, and penetrated by considerable rivers, will attest also. The great geographer, Carl Ritter, who has placed the whole globe in the illumination of geographical science, shows that the relation of interior spaces to the extent of coast has a measurable influence on civilization; and here is the secret of Africa. While all Asia is five times as large as Europe, and Africa more than three times as large, the littoral margins have a different proportion. Asia has seven thousand seven hundred miles of coast; Europe four thousand three hundred, and Africa only three thousand five hundred. For every thirty-seven square miles of the European continent there is one mile of coast, while in Africa one mile of coast responds to one hundred and fifty square miles of continent. The relative extension of coast in Europe is more than four times greater than in Africa. Asia is in the middle, between the two extremes, having for every one hundred and five square miles one mile of coast; and so also is Asia between the two in civilization. There is still another difference with

corresponding advantage to Europe. One-third part of Europe is in the nature of ramification from the mass, furnishing additional opportunities; whereas Africa is a solid, impenetrable continent, without ramifications, without opening gulfs or navigable rivers, except the Nile, which once witnessed the famous Egyptian civilization. And now in addition to all these opportunities by water, Europe has others not less important from a reticulation of railways, bringing all parts together, while Africa is without these new-born civilizers. All these things are apparent and beyond question; nor can their influence be doubted. And thus is the condition of Africa explained without an insult to her people or any new apology for Caste.

The attempt to disparage the African as inferior to other men, except in present condition, shows that same ever-present sciolism. Does Humboldt repel the assumption of superiority and beautifully insist that no people are "in themselves nobler than others"? Then all are men.—all are brothers,—of the same Human Family, with superficial and transitional differences only. Plainly, no differences can make one color superior to another. And looking carefully at the African, in the seclusion and isolation of his native home, we see sufficient reason for that condition which is the chief argument against him. It is doubtful if any people has become civilized without extraneous help. Britain was savage when Roman civilization intervened; so was Gaul. Cadmus brought letters to Greece, and what is the story of Prometheus, who stole fire from Heaven, but an illustration of this law? The African has not stolen fire; no Cadmus has brought letters to him; no Roman civilization has been extended over his continent. Meanwhile left to savage life, he has been a perpetual victim, hunted down at home to feed the bloody maw of slavery, and then transported to another hemisphere, always a slave. In such condition nature has had small opportunity for development. No kindly influences have surrounded his home,—no voice of encouragement has cheered his path,—no prospect of trust or honor has awakened his ambition. His life has been a Dead Sea, where apples of Sodom floated. And yet his story is not without passages which quicken admiration and give assurance for the Future, at times melting to tenderness and at times inspiring to rage, that these children of God, with so much of His best gifts, should be so wronged by their brother man.

The ancient poet tells us that there were heroes before Agamemnon,—that is, before the poet came to praise. Who knows the heroes of those vast unvisited recesses, where there is no history and only short-lived tradition? But among those transported to this hemisphere, heroes have not been wanting. Nowhere in history was the heroic character more conspicuous than in our fugitive slaves. Their story, transferred to

Greece or Rome, would be a much-admired chapter, from which youth would derive new passion for liberty. The story of the African in our late war would be another chapter awakening kindred emotion. But it is in a slave of the West Indies, whose parents were stolen from Africa, that we find an example of genius and wisdom, courage and character, with all the elements of general and ruler. The name borne by this remarkable person as slave was Toussaint, but his success in forcing an "opening" everywhere, secured for him the addition of l'Ouverture, making his name Toussaint l'Ouverture, Toussaint *the Opener*, by which he takes his place in history. He was opener for his people, whom he advanced from Slavery to Freedom, and then sank under the power of Napoleon, who sent an army and fleet to subdue him. More than Agamemnon or any chief before Troy,—more than Spartacus, the renowned leader of the servile insurrection which made Rome tremble,—he was a hero, endowed with a higher nature and better faculties; but he was an African, jet black in complexion. The height that he reached is the measure of his people. Call it high-water mark, if you will; but this is the true line for judgment, and not the low-water mark of Slavery, which is always adopted by the apologists for Caste. Toussaint l'Ouverture is the actual standard by which the African must be judged.

When studied where he is chiefly seen,—not in the affairs of government, but in daily life,—the African awakens attachment and respect. The will of Mr. Upshur, Secretary of State under President Tyler, describes a typical character. Here are the remarkable words:—

"I emancipate and set free my servant, David Rice, and direct my executors to give him *one hundred dollars*. I recommend him, in the strongest manner to the respect, esteem and confidence of any community in which he may happen to live. He has been my slave for twenty-four years, during all which time he has been trusted to every extent, and in every respect; my confidence in him has been unbounded; his relation to myself and family has always been such as to afford him daily opportunities to deceive and injure us, yet he has never been detected in any serious fault, nor even in an unintentional breach of the decorum of his station. His intelligence is of a high order, his integrity above all suspicion, and his sense of right and propriety correct and even refined. I feel that he is justly entitled to carry this certificate from me in the new relations which he must now form; it is due to his long and most faithful services, and to the sincere and steady friendship which I bear to him. In the uninterrupted confidential intercourse of twenty-four years, I have never given him, nor had occasion to give him, one unpleasant word. I know no man who has fewer faults or more excellences than he."

The man thus portrayed was an African, whose only school was slavery. Here again is the standard of this people. The apologist for Caste will be astonished to know, but it is none the less true, that the capacity of the African in scholarship and science, is better attested than that of anybody claiming to be his master. What modern slave-master has taught the Latin like Juan Latino at Seville, in Spain—written it like Capitein at the Hague, or Williams at Jamaica—gained academic honors like those accorded to Amo by the University of Wittenberg? What modern slave-master has equalled in science Banneker of Maryland, who, in his admirable letter to Jefferson, avows himself “of the African race, and in that color which is natural to them, of the deepest dye?” These instances are all from the admirable work of the good Bishop Grégoire, *De la Littérature des Nègres*. Recent experience attests the singular aptitude of the African for knowledge, and his delight in its acquisition. Nor is there any doubt of his delight in doing good. The beneficent system of Sunday Schools in New York is traced to an African woman, who first attempted this work, and her school was for all alike, without distinction of color. To the unquestionable capacity of the African must be added simplicity, amenity, good nature, generosity, fidelity. Mahomedans, who know him well, recognize his superior fidelity. And such also is the report of travellers not besotted by slavery, from Mungo Park to Livingstone, who testify also to tenderness for parents, respect for the aged, hospitality, and patriarchal virtues reviving the traditions of primitive life. “Strike me, but curse not my mother,” said an African slave to his master. And Leo Africanus, the early traveller, describes a chief at Timbuctoo, “very black in complexion but most fair in mind and disposition.” Others dwell on his Christian character, and especially his susceptibility to those influences which are peculiarly Christian,—so that St. Bernard could say of him, *Felix Nigredo, quæ mentis candore imbuta est*. Of all people he is the mildest and most sympathetic. Hate is a plant of difficult growth in his bosom. How often has he returned the harshness of his master with care and protection. The African, more than the European, is formed by nature for the Christian graces.

It is easy to picture another age, when the virtues which ennoble the African will return to bless the people who now discredit him, and Christianity will receive a new development. In the providence of God the more precocious and harder nature of the North is called to make the first advance. Civilization begins through knowledge. An active intelligence performs the part of opening the way. But it may be according to the same Providence, that the gentler people, elevated in knowledge, will teach their teachers what knowledge alone can-

not impart and the African shall more than repay all that he receives. The pioneer intelligence of Europe going to blend with the gentleness of Africa will be a blessed sight; but not more blessed than the gentleness of Africa returning to blend with that same intelligence at home. Under such combined influences men will not only know and do, but they will feel also, so that knowledge in all its departments and life in all its activities, will have the triumphant inspiration of Human Brotherhood.

#### AGENCIES OF CIVILIZATION.

In this work there is no room for prejudice, timidity or despair. Reason, courage, and hope are our allies, while the bountiful agencies of civilization open the way. Time and space, ancient tyrants keeping people apart, are now overcome. There is nothing of aspiration for universal man which is not within the reach of well-directed effort—no matter in what unknown recess of continent, no matter on what distant island of the sea. Wherever man exists, there are the capacities of manhood, with that greatest of all, the capacity for improvement; and the civilization we have reached supplies the means.

As in determining the function of government, so here again is the necessity of knowledge. Man must know himself, and that law of unity appointed for the Human Family. Such is the true light for our steps. Here is guidance and safety. Who can measure the value of knowledge? What imagination can grasp its infinite power? As well measure the sun in its glory. The friendly lamp in our streets is more than the police. Light in the world is more than armies or navies. Where its rays penetrate there has civilization begun. Not the earth but the sun is the centre of our system, and the noon-day effulgence in which we live and move, symbolizes that other effulgence which is found in knowledge.

Great powers are at hand, ministers of human progress. I name two only,—first the printing-press, and secondly the means of intercommunication, whether by navigation or railways, represented by the steam-engine. By these civilization is extended and secured. It is not only carried forward, but fixed so that there can be no return,—like the wheel of an Alpine railway which cannot fall back. Every rotation is a sure advance. Here is what Greece and Rome never knew, and more than Greece and Rome have contributed to man. By the side of these two simple agencies how small all that has come to us from these two politest nations of antiquity. We can better spare Greece and Rome than the printing-press and steam-engine. Not a triumph in literature, art or jurisprudence, from the story of Homer and the odes of Horace to the statue of Apollo and the bust of Augustus, from the eloquence

of Demosthenes and Cicero, to that Roman law, which has become the law of the world, that must not yield in value to these two immeasurable possessions. To the printing-press and steam-engine add now their youthful handmaid, the electric telegraph, whose swift and delicate fingers weave the thread by which nations are brought into instant communion, while great cities like London and Paris, New York and San Francisco become suburbs to each other, and all mankind feel together the throb of joy or sorrow. Through these incomparable agencies is knowledge made co-extensive with space and time on earth. No distance of place or epoch it will not pervade. Thus every achievement in thought or science, every discovery by which man is elevated, becomes the common property of the whole Human Family. There can be no monopoly. Sooner or later all enjoy the triumph. Standing on the shoulders of the past, man stands also on the shoulders of every science discovered, every art advanced, every truth declared. There is no height of culture or of virtue, if virtue itself be not the highest culture, which may not be reached. There is no excellence of government or society which may not be grasped. Where is the stopping place? Where the goal? One obstacle is overcome only to find another, which is overcome, and then another overcome also, in the ascending scale of human improvement.

And then shall be fulfilled the words of prophecy, which men have read so long, with hope darkened by despair; "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;" "it shall come that I will gather the nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory." The promises of Christianity, in harmony with the promises of science, and more beautiful still, will become the realities of earth, and that precious example where is the way of life, will be another noon-day sun for guidance and safety.

#### CERTAIN TRIUMPH.

The question *how*, is followed by that other question, *when*. The answer is easy. Not at once; not by any sudden conquest; not in the life-time of any individual man; not in any way which does not recognize nature as co-worker. It is by constant, incessant, unceasing activity in conformity with law that nature works, and so in these world-subduing operations, man can be successful only in harmony with nature. Because in our brief pilgrimage we are not permitted to witness the transcendent glory, it is none the less certain. The peaceful conquest will proceed, and every day must contribute its fruits.

At the beginning of the last century, Russia was a barbarous country, shut out from opportunities of improvement. Authen-

tic report attests its condition. Through contact with Europe it was inoculated. The life-giving *virus* circulated and this vast empire felt the change. Exposed to European contact at one point only, here the inoculation began; but the native energies of the people, under the guidance of a powerful ruler, responded to the influence, and Russia came within the widening circle of European civilization. Why may not this same experience be repeated elsewhere, while distant places are inoculated by the beneficent hand?

To help in this work it is not necessary to be emperor or king. Everybody can do something; for to everybody is given something to do, and it is by this accumulation of activities, by this succession of atoms, that the result is accomplished. I use trivial illustrations when I remind you that the coral-reef, on which navies are stranded, is the work of the multitudinous insect—that the unyielding stone is worn away by drops; but this is the law of nature, under which no influence is lost. Water and air both testify to the slightest movement. Not a ripple stirred by the passing breeze or by the freighted ship cleaving the sea, which is not prolonged to a thousand shores, leaving behind an endless progeny, so long as ocean endures. Not a wave of air set in motion by the human voice, which is not prolonged likewise into unknown space. But these watery and aerial pulses typify the acts of man. Not a thing done, not a word said, which does not help or hinder the grand, the beautiful, the holy consummation. And the influence is in proportion to the individual or nation from whom it proceeds. God forbid that our nation should send through all time that defiance of human nature which is found in Caste.

There are two passages of the New Testament which are to me of infinite significance. We read them often, perhaps, without comprehending their value. The first is with regard to leaven, when the Saviour said, "the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven," and then St. Paul, taking up the image, on two different occasions, repeats, "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." In this homely illustration we see what is accomplished by a small influence. A little changes all. Here again are the acts of man typified. All that we do is leaven; all that our country does is leaven. Everybody in his sphere contributes leaven, and helps his country to contribute that mighty leaven which will leaven the whole mighty lump. The other passage—difficult to childhood, though afterwards recognized as a faithful record of human experience—is where we are told, "For whosoever hath to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance." Here to me is a new incentive to duty. Because the world inclines to those who have, therefore must we study to serve those who have not, that we may counteract the worldly tendency. Give to the poor and lowly,—give to the



outcast,—give to those degraded by their fellow-man, that they may be elevated in the scale of Humanity,—assured that what we give is not only valuable in itself, but the beginning of other acquisitions,—that the knowledge we convey makes other knowledge easy,—that the right we recognize helps secure all the rights of man. Give to the African only his due,—and straightway the promised abundance will follow.

#### CONCLUSION.

In leaving this question, which I have opened to you so imperfectly, I am impressed anew with its grandeur. The best interests of our country and the best interests of mankind are involved in the answer. Let Caste prevail and civilization is thwarted. Let Caste be trampled out, and there will be a triumph which will make this Republic more than ever an example. The good influence will extend in prolonged pulsations, reaching the most distant shores. Not a land which will not feel the spread, just in proportion to its necessities. Above all, Africa will feel it, and the surpassing duty which civilization owes to this whole continent, where man has so long degraded his fellow-man, will begin to be discharged, while the voice of the Great Shepherd is heard among its people.

In the large interests beyond, I would not lose sight of the practical interests at home. It is important for our domestic peace, not to speak of our good name as a Republic, that this question should be settled. Long enough has its shadow rested upon us, and now it lowers from an opposite quarter. How often have I said in other places that nothing can be settled which is not right, and now I say that there can be no settlement here except in harmony with our declared principles and with universal truth. To this end Caste must be forbidden. "Haply for I am black," said Othello. "Haply for I am yellow," repeats the Chinese, all of which may be ground for personal like or dislike, but not for any denial of rights or any exclusion from that equal copartnership which is the promise of the Republic to all men.

Here, as always, the highest safety is in doing right. Justice is ever practical, ever politic; it is the best practice, the best policy. Whatever reason shows to be just cannot, when reduced to practice, produce other than good. And now I simply ask you to be just. To those who find peril in the growing multitudes admitted to citizenship, I reply that our Republic assumed these responsibilities when it declared the equal rights of all men, and that just government stands only on the consent of the governed. Hospitality of citizenship is the law of its being. This is its great first principle; this is the talisman of its empire. Would you conquer nature, follow nature; and here, would

you conquer physical diversities, follow that moral law, declared by our Fathers, which is the highest law of nature, and supreme above all men. Welcome, then, to the stranger, hurrying from opposite shores, across two great oceans, from the East, from the West, with the sun, against the sun. Here he cannot be stranger. If the Chinese come for labor only, we have the advantage of their wonderful and docile industry. If they come for citizenship, then do they offer the pledge of incorporation in our Republic, filling it with increase. Nor is there peril in the gifts they bring. As all rivers are lost in the sea, which shows no sign of their presence, so will all peoples be lost in the widening confines of our Republic, with an ocean-bound continent for its unparalleled expanse and one harmonious citizenship, where all are equal in rights, for its gentle and impartial sway.



